

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

51. (Original) A method for identifying a biological sample associated with a container, comprising:

providing a container suitable for receiving a biological sample;
providing a first database for storing information relating to said container;
marking said container with a universally unique identifier which distinguishes said container from other like containers independently of the contents of said container;
associating said universally unique identifier with container information stored in said first database;
placing a biological sample in said container;
providing a second database for storing information relating to said biological sample;

and

associating said universally unique identifier with sample information stored in said second database.

52. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein said container information identifies at least one of a manufacturer of said container and a characteristic of said container.

53. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein said first database is maintained by a manufacturer of said container.

54. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein said first database is maintained by an organization of container manufacturers.

55. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein said first database is accessed by at least

one of a direct computer link and the Internet.

56. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein said sample information includes at least one of a patient identification and a test identification.

57. (Amended) The method of claim 51, further comprising ~~the step of~~ using said universally unique identifier to query said second database and thereby retrieve said sample information.

58. (Amended) The method of claim 51, further comprising ~~the step of~~ using said universally unique identifier to modify said sample information stored in said second database.

59. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein said second database is maintained by a user of said container.

60. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein said universally unique identifier provides the equivalent of at least 12 decimal digits.

61. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein said universally unique identifier provides the equivalent of at least 18 decimal digits.

62. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein said universally unique identifier comprises one or more first areas on an outer surface of said container having a first specular reflectance which differs from a second specular reflectance of a second area adjacent to said first area.

63. (Original) The method of claim 62, wherein said first specular reflectance is less than said second specular reflectance.

64. (Original) The method of claim 63, wherein said marking step comprises laser

etching said outer surface of said container to define said one or more first areas.

65. (Original) The method of claim 63, wherein said marking step comprises abrading said outer surface of said container to define said one or more first areas.

66. (Original) The method of claim 63, wherein said marking step comprises applying a thin film member to said outer surface of said container.

67. (Original) The method of claim 62, wherein said first specular reflectance is greater than said second specular reflectance.

68. (Original) The method of claim 67, wherein said marking step comprises melting said outer surface to define said one or more first areas.

91 69. (Original) The method of claim 62, further including detecting said one or more first areas of said outer surface of said container.

70. (Original) The method of claim 69, wherein said detecting step comprises projecting light toward said outer surface of said container from a source and sensing light reflected by said container from said source.